

BUSINESS WATCH NEWSLETTER

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

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DEFINITIONS OF INTEREST:

- **ROBBERY** is a crime in which a theft occurs directly from a person by use of fear or force.
- **BURGLARY** is entry into a building with the intent to commit a theft or felony.
- **THEFT** is removal or fraud of any personal property from the owner.

WELCOME TO BUSINESS WATCH!

Welcome to the first edition of the Business Watch newsletter! As a member of this program, you will receive quarterly newsletters that will educate you on how to keep your business and its patrons safe. Lake Forest Police Services is dedicated to being pro-active when it comes to fighting crime in our community. We value your help in acting as extra eyes and ears for law enforcement. When suspecting criminal activity, members are encouraged not to intervene but to contact local authorities. Members will learn what types of suspicious activity to look out for and how their pro-active efforts contribute to making our community a safer place. The Business Watch program provides local law enforcement and businesses with the opportunity to come together to establish a positive, communicative relationship. You are important stakeholders in our community and if you thrive, we as a community will reap the benefits of your success. Our residents and patrons will feel safer in our businesses and other communal areas (i.e. streets and parks). It is important to not only have a relationship with local law enforcement, but to also know who your neighboring merchants are. It is this communication that is essential to any community when taking a stand against crime. I encourage you to take a hard look at your business, particularly its physical layout, employees, hiring practices and overall security. Assess its vulnerability to all kinds of crime, from burglary to embezzlement. It is important to remember that the majority of crimes against businesses are crimes of opportunity. Failure to implement good security precautions can invite crime into your business. Don't give criminals the opportunity they are looking for.

This is a free program and business owners, managers and employees are all encouraged to participate. Thank you for taking the time to go the extra mile for your business and our community.

Sincerely,

Melisa Cavazos

Crime Prevention Specialist
Lake Forest Police Services



SUGGESTION BOX



Our first Business Watch meeting held in February 2010 was a training on counterfeit money detection. The Crime Prevention Unit at Lake Forest Police Services is planning on offering more trainings on a quarterly basis. What topics are you interested in? Identity theft prevention? Check/credit fraud? Robbery and Burglary prevention? Employee theft? You can call our Crime Prevention Specialist, Melisa Cavazos, at (949) 461-3546 or e-mail her at mcavazos@ocsd.org to offer your suggestions.

ASK DEPUTY NELSON...

Question: I heard about the free shredding program offered at Lake Forest Police Services. Can businesses utilize this service or is it just for residents?

**Deputy Nelson's Answer:**

Unfortunately, the program is only offered to residents. We currently don't have enough

space in our confidential shredding bins to accommodate the businesses in Lake Forest. Our residents who participate in the program are limited to one box per week. I would, however, like to encourage all residents and business owners to invest in a shredder. You can find some relatively inexpensive ones at local office and home stores. I recommend buying one with a built in CD

and credit card shredder as well. It's your job to protect any personal information relating to your business and your customers. Criminals are not above going through trash bins to locate personal information. Shredding all paper, cards, or CD's with any valuable data will reduce identity theft in our city.

If you have any questions for a deputy, you can reach me at (949) 461-3545.



Deputy Richard Nelson is the Administrative Deputy for Lake Forest Police Services. To submit a question, please e-mail rnelson@lakeforestca.gov

WHAT IS ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT (ORT)?

There are two distinct shoplifting threats: petty shoplifting and Organized Retail Theft (ORT). ORT is a fast growing problem throughout the United States, affecting a wide range of retail establishments. The most common targets are supermarkets, chain drug stores, independent pharmacies, mass merchandisers, convenience stores and discount operations. It has become the most pressing security problem confronting retailers. ORT crime is separate and distinct from petty shoplifting in that it involves professional theft rings that move quickly from community to community and across state lines to steal large amounts of merchandise that is then repackaged and sold back into the marketplace through the internet (i.e. eBay) and flea markets. On the other hand, petty shoplifting is usually limited to items stolen for personal use or consumption.

These are the top 7 products (in no particular order) commonly stolen in ORT operations.

1. Designer clothing
2. Benadryl
3. Crest white strips
4. Prilosec (heartburn medication)
1. Gift cards
2. Electronics
3. Infant Formula (Similac brand)

We encourage you to strengthen your businesses' defense against this type of crime. When dealing with ORT criminals, you are dealing with a higher level of sophistication. These thefts are carefully planned out and that means you must carefully plan your own defense against them before they enter your business. The following 5 steps can help your business be more prepared.

1. **Hire the right people.** In some cases, store employ-

ees are on the inside signaling to a team of thieves. Don't forget that approximately 44.5 percent of retail losses are associated with store associates.

2. **Provide training on loss prevention for staff.**
3. **Carefully set or revise policy and procedures to tighten security.**
4. **Identify the difference between how to handle amateur shoplifters vs. professional criminals.**
5. **Secure assets through the use of technology and investigative teams.** In-store cameras and analytical software help give a better picture of store operations. Retailers must also evaluate the physical security of the building and have systems that effectively track money and merchandise. Investigative teams can also identify retail fraud patterns.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."
-Henry de Bracton



IS YOUR BUSINESS A TARGET FOR CRIME?

“... The County Sheriff’s Department has charged a local couple with robbing Tom’s Tailor Shop at gun-point with a pistol around 5 p.m. Friday. This incident is the latest in a series of recent robberies of a number of area businesses, including banks, convenience stores, gift shops, clothing stores, and gas stations, and has created a tense climate for businesses and local law enforcement officials...”

This account from the newspaper of a small southeastern community typifies those that appear almost daily in the media across the country. It's a fact—the threat of crime is part of doing business. NO business is immune from the growing menace of burglary, robbery, shoplifting, personal

assaults, internal thefts, check forgery, and computer and credit card fraud. Studies have shown that at least 30 percent of all small business failures are the result of losses from crime. Hardest hit of all are retail businesses, but statistics show that ALL small businesses suffer devastating effects from crime.

As a business owner, you are often told that the responsibility to prevent external and internal theft lies squarely on you. But what, exactly, can you do to create a safe, secure environment for your employees and your business?

First....When you start a Business Watch program in your area, block or shopping mall, you will take an important step. Neighboring businesses work-

ing with the local law enforcement agency can establish and support a network that works. This will make YOUR business community an attractive and safe place to work and shop.

Business Watch is hardly a new idea. In fact, it is based on one of the oldest and simplest concepts known to man—neighbor-helping-neighbor. And when neighboring merchants get together and cooperate with law enforcement, crime CAN be reduced. The more participation, the greater the reduction!

“Punishment is the last and the least effective instrument in the hands of the legislator for the prevention of crime.”

-John Ruskin



8 TIPS: BUGLARY PREVENTION

1. Make sure all outside entrances and inside security doors have deadbolt locks. If you use padlocks, they should be made of steel and kept locked at all times. Remember to remove serial numbers from your locks, to prevent unauthorized keys from being made.
2. All outside security doors should be metal-lined and secured with metal security crossbars. Pin all exposed hinges to prevent removal.
3. Windows should have secure locks and burglar-resistant glass. Consider installing metal grates on all your windows except display windows. Remove all expensive items from window displays at night and make sure you can see easily into your business after closing.
4. Light the inside and outside of your business, especially around doors, windows, skylights, or other entry points. Consider installing covers over exterior lights and power sources to deter tampering.
5. Check the parking lot for good lighting and unobstructed views.
6. Keep your cash register in plain view from the outside of your business, so it can be monitored by police during the day or night. Leave it open and empty after closing.
7. Be sure your safe is fireproof and securely anchored. It should be kept in plain view. Leave it open when it's empty, use it to lock up valuables when you close. Remember to change the combination when an employee who has had access to it leaves your business.
8. Before you invest in an alarm system, check with several companies and decide what level of security fits your needs. Contact your local law enforcement agency to recommend established companies. Learn how to use your system properly. Check the system daily, and run a test when closing.

We are on the web!

www.lakeforestca.gov • www.ocsd.org

**CITY OF LAKE FOREST
ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

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The City of Lake Forest, in partnership with the Orange County Sheriff's Department, is dedicated to helping our residents and businesses keep themselves safe. Our goal is to provide educational programs and training tools that enable residents and businesses to learn proven crime prevention strategies that reduce and deter crime.



B U S I N E S S S E C U R I T Y S U R V E Y

PERIMETER

CIRCLE ONE

1. Are address numbers located in a logical location and easily visible from all directions of the street? Y N
2. Is shrubbery trimmed for visibility? Y N
3. Are exterior doors of metal or solid wood construction? Y N
4. Are all exterior door frames strong and tight enough to prevent forcing or spreading? Y N
5. Are all entrances and exits well lit with at least a 60-watt light bulb? Y N
6. Are employee and customer parking spots in a secure area? Y N
7. Is the employee/customer parking area well lit during hours of darkness? Y N

SECURITY MEASURES/SYSTEMS

1. Do security cameras cover your entire yard/complex? Y N
2. Are your images from your camera system of a high enough quality to observe facial features? Y N
3. Are all entrances and exits covered by the camera system? Y N
4. Do you have nighttime security personnel? Y N
5. Do you have 24-hour security personnel on weekends or when the business is closed? Y N

The more yes's you answer means your business is more secure!